

Wisconsin Family Day

To help celebrate the importance of the family dinner to the well-being of our children, the Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin PTA, and Wisconsin Family and Consumer Educators are proud to promote Family Day on September 25, 2006.

Children whose parents are actively involved in their lives are more likely to stay motivated in school, develop positive eating habits, and avoid drugs and alcohol.

Family Day is meant to emphasize the importance of parent-child communication and to encourage families to make family dinners a regular feature of their lives.

Family dinners are a great opportunity to make daily connections and strengthen family bonds. They can be fun and enjoyable for the whole family as well as economical and nutritious.



How You Can Promote Family Day to Other Families

- Encourage your parent-teacher associations to adopt and publicize Family Day.
- Encourage teachers to incorporate Family Day into their lesson plans.



Tips for Getting the Family Together for Dinner

Busy Schedules

- Try once or twice a week.
- Plan ahead.
- Try weekends or breakfast.
- Family meals can happen even if someone has to miss.

No time to cook

- It doesn't have to be hot or fancy.
- Team up to share cooking (and fun) with the kids.

Making mealtime pleasant

- Don't force children to eat. The parent's job is to provide food and a safe place to eat. The child's job is to choose how much and what to eat.
- Ask your children what they did during the day; try not to argue at the dinner table.
- Meals don't need to be always at home. Break up your routine by going to your family's favorite restaurant or have a picnic.

What about TV and phone calls?

- Make a no-TV rule for meals.
- Unplug the phone and let the answering machine take the call.

Don't know how to cook?

- Start simple.
- Check out simple cookbooks from the library.
- Invite friends and family members to help.

Family Nutrition Resources

For fun family activities, nutrition information, and more:

www.fns.usda.gov/tn/

www.eatright.org

www.aafp.org

Easy and Delicious Menu Ideas for Family Dinners

Menu 1

Grape-Pasta-Chicken Sauté (see recipe)

Tasty green beans (add garlic powder and a few drops of sesame oil)

Fat-free or low-fat milk

Grape-Pasta-Chicken Sauté



Makes 6 servings

8 oz. gnocchi or large shelled pasta, cooked
½ cup chopped onion
2 teaspoons olive oil
3 chicken breasts, cooked and cubed
1 cup fresh or frozen pea pods, thawed, cut in half diagonally
1 cup cubed sweet red or yellow pepper
1 cup sliced mushrooms
½ teaspoon dried oregano, crushed
2 cups seedless grapes
Garlic salt and ground pepper to taste
Parmesan cheese, grated

Directions

1. In a large fry pan, heat oil over medium heat. Sauté onions and garlic in olive oil until softened.
2. Add pea pods, peppers, mushrooms, and oregano. Cook 2-3 minutes or until vegetables are crisp tender.
3. Stir in chicken, grapes and pasta.
4. Add salt and pepper to taste, and heat thoroughly.
5. Garnish with Parmesan Cheese.

Menu 2

Make-Your-Own Veggie Pizza

Side salad

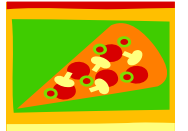
Quick fruit shortcake (see preparation tips)

Fat-free or low-fat milk

Preparation tips:

Quick Fruit Shortcake: Cut four slices of angel food cake. Top with a mixture of 2 cups of frozen strawberries, 3 tbsp. sugar, and 1/4 cup orange juice.

Make-Your-Own Pizza



Makes 6 servings

One frozen loaf of whole wheat bread dough, thawed
¾ cup prepared pizza sauce
3 Tablespoons cornmeal

Choice of Toppings:

1 medium tomato, thinly sliced
1 small onion, chopped
1 small green bell pepper, chopped
8 small pitted green or black olives, sliced
2 cloves of garlic, minced, or ¼ tsp garlic powder
6 mushrooms, sliced
¾ cup of Mozzarella cheese, shredded

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425 F.
2. Sprinkle corn meal on two cookie sheets.
3. Cut dough into 3 equal pieces. Roll each into a 10-inch round crust. Place on cookie sheets.
4. Spread ¼ cup of sauce on each crust.
5. Layer a choice of toppings on each crust.
6. Bake 20-25 minutes.

Recipes! Recipes! Recipes!

For heart healthy recipes:

<http://www.nih.gov/>

For thrifty, healthy meals plus tips:

<http://www.usda.gov/cnpp/Pubs/Cookbook/thriftym.pdf>

Questions to Spark Fun Conversation at the Dinner Table

A desired outcome of Family Day is for families to have an enjoyable time together eating dinner. This will help make family meals a priority for all members of the family.

Talking together has been found to be the most important family activity for both parents and kids, especially discussing topics beyond their daily activities.

Below is a list of questions to help your family get started. You may want to write each one on a piece of paper and put them in a bowl. Once the meal has been served, take turns pulling a piece of paper from the bowl and reading the question. Have each family member answer the same question or move on to a new question for each person.

- If you were a food, what would you be?
- Why do people drive on parkways and park on driveways?
- What do you think is the greatest invention? Why?
- Describe what it means to be a best friend.
- What is your earliest childhood memory?
- Is there something that you memorized long ago and still remember?
- Which way does the toilet paper roll go? Over or under?
- What is your favorite season of the year? Why?
- What special talent do you have?
- What can you do that makes people laugh?
- How many people do you know who are left-handed?



Frequently Asked Questions

My schedule doesn't permit me to have a dinner with my family on Family Day. Can I still celebrate it?

Family day is a *symbolic* event. It is meant as a reminder of the importance of parental involvement in a child's life. The important part of the day is spending quality time together. If you cannot have dinner together, pick another meal or activity that you can do as a family.

Is it true that eating dinner with my teen can help prevent substance abuse?

Yes! A recent survey found that teens with parents who have established rules and expectations for their teen's behavior and monitor what their teen does are at one-quarter the risk of smoking, drinking, and using drugs as teens whose parents are not involved.

What other actions can I take to help my child avoid risky behaviors?

Be involved. Involved parents take at least nine of the following 12 actions:

- Eat dinner with their teen almost every night.
- Turn off TV during dinner.
- Make clear they would be "extremely upset" if their teen used "pot" and other drugs.
- Expect to be and are told the truth by their teen about where they really are going in evenings or on weekends.

- Know where their teen is after school and on weekends.
- Are "very aware" of their teen's academic performance.
- Monitor what their teen watches on TV.
- Put restrictions on the music CDs they buy.
- Monitor their teen's Internet usage.
- Impose a weekend curfew.
- Assign their teen regular chores.
- Have an adult present when the teen returns from school.

For more information on nutrition or family meals:

- Jill Camber Davidson, RD, CD, Nutrition Education Consultant, (608) 267-9120
jill.camberdavidson@dpi.state.wi.us
- National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University www.casacolumbia.org
- University of Washington, Department of Health Services, Nutritional Sciences Program
<http://depts.washington.edu/vitalwic/family.htm>



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The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin PTA, and Wisconsin Family and Consumer Educators encourage all Wisconsin families to participate in

WISCONSIN FAMILY DAY



SEPTEMBER 25, 2006

A Day to Eat Dinner with
Your Children

Family Day is meant as a reminder of the importance of parental involvement in raising a healthy child.

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent